

Helping Our Children Learn to Grow in Leadership

**Growing Godly Family Series
Manual 14**

By

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Growing Godly Families Series

This series of manuals is the result of a series of weekly e-mail topics that have been prepared and e-mailed over a period of years. They originally started out as a one page topic that gradually grew to the point where most topics are about three pages in length.

This series is especially designed for those who are already Christian leaders to give them Biblical principles for the development of godly physical and spiritual families. Because they give Biblical principles for developing godly families, they are also helpful for new Christians that want to grow and become godly families.

Mark 10:43-45 says, "Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." In these verses Christ taught that godly spiritual leaders do not have the attitudes of leaders in the world. Worldly leadership is based on power and authority and is designed to benefit the leader and place him above others. In contrast, godly spiritual leadership is designed to help every Christian reach their full potential in Christ. The following three statements give a summary of three styles of leadership. The purpose of this series is to help every family develop their full potential as godly families.

If we drive people, we will drive them until they can get out of our way.

If we lead people, we will be able to lead them as far as we have gone ourselves.

If we serve people, we will help each person develop their full God given potential and equip each person for the ministry that Christ has prepared for every Christian.

In the world people often measure success by the amount of things that they accumulate in this world before they die. However, they are unable to take any of those things with them when they die. Mark 8:36-37 says, "For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?" Success produces rewards until we die but it produces nothing for eternity.

In contrast, God measures effectiveness by our faithfulness and obedience. Matthew 6:19-21 says, "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." Effectiveness produces eternal rewards. Mark 10:29-30 says, "So Jesus answered and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel's, who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time--houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions--and in the age to come, eternal life." I Corinthians 10:31 says, "Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." The Growing Godly Families Series is designed to help your family life count for eternity by bringing glory to God.

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1.

Learning to Develop Our Inner Man

Today we are beginning a new series to help our children learn to grow in godly leadership. Godly leadership is not based on personality, human abilities, business success or any of the other things to which the world looks when the world looks for leadership. Instead godly leadership is to be developed and recognized as people grow in godly character so that they are led by the love of Christ. They lead others by example and do not drive people by fear which is often the way that worldly leadership functions. As a result, we begin our study of this topic by learning how to develop our inner man.

In I Timothy 2:1-2 we read, “Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the commandment of God our Savior and the Lord Jesus Christ, our hope, To Timothy, a true son in the faith: Grace, mercy, *and* peace from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord.” Here we see that Paul began this letter by saying that he was an apostle of Jesus Christ. Paul was called by Christ to be an apostle to the Gentiles. That ministry was later confirmed by the other apostles. Galatians 2:9 says, “And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that had been given to me, they gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we *should go* to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.” Paul faithfully carried out that ministry to the Gentiles throughout his ministry.

We see that this call of Paul as an apostle of Jesus Christ was by the commandment of God our Savior. The Old Testament writers often spoke of the fact that God was their salvation. Isaiah 12:2 says, “Behold, God *is* my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid; ‘For God, the LORD, *is* my strength and song; He also has become my salvation.” Here we see that Isaiah looked to God for his salvation. Later we know that the Father sent Christ to this earth to provide that salvation. We also see that Jesus Christ is our hope. God planned our salvation but Christ provided our salvation. As a result, it is Christ that gives us hope for the future.

Paul wrote this letter to Timothy whom Paul described as a true son in the faith. Here we see that it is possible to have spiritual children as well as physical children. In fact Paul had many spiritual children. I Corinthians 4:14 says, “I do not write these things to shame you, but as my beloved children I warn *you*.” In Philemon 1:10 Paul wrote, “I appeal to you for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten *while* in my chains.” Here we see that those who choose to provide the care of a spiritual parent will have spiritual children who develop and become full partners in ministry. Paul wanted each of his spiritual children to experience grace, mercy and peace from the Father and Christ.

We see that Timothy was in Ephesus at the time that Paul wrote this letter. I Timothy 1:3-4 says, “As I urged you when I went into Macedonia—remain in Ephesus that you may charge some that they teach no other doctrine, nor give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which cause disputes rather than godly edification which is in faith.” Paul had made a return visit to Ephesus after several years in prison first in Caesarea and then in Rome. We see that several kinds of false teaching had come into the church in Ephesus during these years. The word “charge” means to give a command or to pass on instructions.

In verse seven we will see that some of these who were teaching other doctrines were individuals who desired to be teachers of the law. The word translated “teachers of the law” is only used three times in the New Testament. In addition to verse seven it was used to describe Gamaliel in Acts 5:34. Then Luke 5:17 says, “Now it happened on a certain day, as He was teaching, that there were Pharisees and teachers of the law sitting by, who had come out of every town of Galilee, Judea, and Jerusalem. And the power of the Lord was *present* to heal them.” In both Luke and Acts we see that these were Jewish teachers or interpreters of the law who would interpret the Old Testament for the people. Since they were some who were teaching other doctrines these would be Jews who were trying to teach the Ephesians to add certain elements of the law to Christianity.

The decision of the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15 is clearly stated in Acts 15:28-29 where we read, “For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: that you abstain from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell.” Since these four things go back to the first nine chapters of Genesis these were universal teachings for all people long before the Jewish law was given and so are the only things that the Gentiles were required to observe. Other teachings that were confusing the church at Ephesus were fables (invented stories or traditions) and endless genealogies (lists of ancestors). Paul said that these teachings only produced questions instead of helping Christians to be built up in the Lord.

I Timothy 1:5-7 says, “Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, *from* a good conscience, and *from* sincere faith, from which some, having strayed, have turned aside to idle talk, desiring to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they say nor the things which they affirm.” Here we see that the true purpose of the Old Testament law is love. Matthew 22:37-40 says, “Jesus said to him, “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ “This is *the* first and great commandment. “And *the* second *is* like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ “On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.” We see here that love fulfills the whole Old Testament.

In order for that love to be godly love, it requires a pure heart, a good conscience and a sincere faith. The word that is translated “pure” means free from sin and guilt. A good conscience is a conscience that is good in its character and beneficial to others by the things that it does. A sincere or genuine faith is the result of a person placing his or her faith in Christ. The false teachings were being taught by individuals who had swerved or strayed from the faith. The word is translated strayed in II Timothy 2:18 where we read, “Who have strayed concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past; and they overthrow the faith of some.” Here we see that false teaching comes from those who turn away from the truth of the Gospel. Although such individuals wanted to be teachers of the law, they did not understand the purpose of the law and at the same time they thought that their teachings were true.

I Timothy 1:8-11 goes on to say, “But we know that the law *is* good if one uses it lawfully, knowing this: that the law is not made for a righteous person, but for *the* lawless and

insubordinate, for *the* ungodly and for sinners, for *the* unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, for fornicators, for sodomites, for kidnappers, for liars, for perjurers, and if there is any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine, according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God which was committed to my trust.” Here we see that the law is very good if it is used for the purpose for which God intended it.

That purpose is explained in Galatians 3:24-25 where we read, “Therefore the law was our tutor *to bring us* to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.” The purpose of the law was to bring us to Christ so that we realize that the only way that we can be justified (declared to be righteous) is by faith in Christ. Once the law has completed that purpose we are no longer under the law. The law kept us in bondage. That is why Galatians 5:18 says, “But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.” The law is good if we use it for its intended purpose to help people see that they are sinners and need a Savior. However, once a person becomes a Christian that person is no longer under the law.

That is why we are told that the law is not made for the righteous person. At the moment of salvation we have the righteousness of Christ placed on us. II Corinthians 5:21 says, “For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” Our sin was placed on Christ so that at the moment of salvation the righteousness of Christ could be placed on us. That is why the law is not made for the person that stands in the righteousness of Christ.

We need to see for whom the law was made. I Corinthians 9:21 uses this word four times where it is translated without law. That verse says, “To those *who are* without law, as without law (not being without law toward God, but under law toward Christ), that I might win those *who are* without law.” Here we see that it refers to the Gentiles who never had the law and need to hear the law to realize they are sinners. In Acts 2:23 it talks about the Jews who crucified Christ and called them wicked. That verse says, “Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death.” Here we see that it speaks about Jews who knew the law and were in rebellion against God.

In fact the first six words lawless, insubordinate, ungodly, sinners, unholy and profane all speak about people who are in rebellion against God and show their rebellion by breaking the first part of the law which speaks of the sins of mankind against God. When people are in rebellion against God they also show their rebellion against God by rebelling against people. As a result, the rest of the list covers the second part of the law as the second part of the law talks about the sins of mankind against other people. Once we come to Christ He wants us to learn to be led by the Holy Spirit. That is why it is so important for us to help our children learn to be led by the Spirit. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to be walk in love and be led by the Spirit.

2.

Learning to Make Our Lives Count for Christ

In our last topic we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to be led by the Spirit so that they will develop the inner man. As we are led by the Spirit we grow in godly character. That causes us to demonstrate the love of Christ out of a pure heart. It causes us to have a clear conscience. It causes us to develop a genuine faith. As we show our children by example how to be led by the Holy Spirit and develop the inner man, we will see that our children will want to learn how to make their lives count for Christ. That will be the focus of our topic today.

We begin this section by being reminded that the life of Paul did not always have a positive impact for Christ. I Timothy 1:12-14 we read, “And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting *me* into the ministry, although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did *it* ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.” Here we see how the life of Paul was changed by Christ so that he could make his life count for Christ. Paul gave thanks for what the Lord had done in his life.

The word that is translated “enabled” means to receive strength or to make strong. It is used in Acts 9:22 to speak of Paul soon after he became a Christian. That verse says, “But Saul increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who dwelt in Damascus, proving that this *Jesus* is the Christ.” Here we see that immediately after Paul repented of his sin and turned to Christ that he began to receive strength and his life began to count for Christ. Many years later while a prisoner in Rome Paul said in Philippians 4:13, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” Here we see that Paul still realized that his strength must come from Christ if his life was going to continue to count for Christ. As Paul came to the end of his life he used this word one more time to describe what the Lord had done in his life. II Timothy 4:17-18 says, “But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that the message might be preached fully through me, and *that* all the Gentiles might hear. And I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. And the Lord will deliver me from every evil work and preserve *me* for His heavenly kingdom. To Him *be* glory forever and ever. Amen!” Paul knew that he had to receive strength from the Lord to carry out the ministry that the Lord gave him.

Paul also encouraged his spiritual son Timothy to receive his strength from the Lord to make his life count for the Lord. II Timothy 2:1-2 says, “You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.” Here we see that Paul told Timothy that if he would depend on the strength that the Lord provided that his life would have an impact on a whole group of faithful men who would be able to teach others also. Because Paul trusted the Lord for strength the Lord counted him faithful and put him into the ministry, he knew Timothy would have a similar ministry. The same will be true for our children.

Before the Father drew Paul to Christ, his life had been very different. Paul used three words to describe his previous life. He said that he was formerly a blasphemer. The word translated “blasphemer” means one whose speaking against God is evil, abusive and slanderous. The word that is translated “persecutor” means one that mistreats others and causes them to flee to protect their lives. The word that is translated “insolent man” means a proud man who speaks evil and commits violence against others. However, God showed the greatness of His mercy by saving Paul. Paul said that he did these things in ignorance because of his unbelief. Christ showed that He clearly understood this ignorance in those who are still in unbelief when He said in Luke 23:34, “Then Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.” And they divided His garments and cast lots.” Those in unbelief do not understand what is righteous.

Paul understood that the grace that the Lord shows when He saves us is an exceedingly abundant grace. Grace is the forgiveness of God that we receive because of the fact that God gave us the faith to believe in Christ and understand His love for us. We also want to help our children understand the greatness of the grace of God. It is also the grace of God that gives us the strength to live a new life. Titus 2:11-12 says, “For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age.” Christ does give us His power to live a new life.

Paul went on to say in I Timothy 1:15-17, “This *is* a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life. Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, *be* honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.” Here we see that Paul understood the purpose why Christ came to this earth. He came to save sinners. Until people know that they are sinners they will not come to Christ for forgiveness. We want to help our children learn how to explain to people that they are sinners but that Christ came to save them from their sin if they will repent and place their faith in Christ.

Paul said that he was the chief of sinners because of the fact that he had formerly been a blasphemer, a persecutor and an insolent man. Many people feel that God could never forgive them because they are so sinful. We want to help them understand that Paul said that he was the most sinful person so if the Lord could save Paul that He will also save them if they will come to Christ in repentance and faith. Paul then explained why God chose to show mercy to him. God wanted to show the greatness of the longsuffering (patience) of Christ. God saved Paul as a pattern or example for all who will believe in the future. All who will believe on Christ are promised everlasting life. God also wants to make the lives of all who believe have an eternal impact. Ephesians 2:10 says, “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.” Here we see that our lives have been created for good works so that we can spend the rest of our lives carrying out those good works.

God is the One who deserves all of the glory for what He did in the life of Paul and for what He

has done in our lives. He is the eternal King. He is immortal and will never die. He is invisible so we cannot see Him even though we know that He is with us. He is the source of all wisdom. He is the one who deserves all glory and all honor. He is to receive this glory forever and ever.

In I Timothy 1:18-20 we read, “This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare, having faith and a good conscience, which some having rejected, concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck, of whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I delivered to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme.” We saw in the previous topic that a charge means to give a command or to pass on instructions. I Timothy 1:3 says, “As I urged you when I went into Macedonia—remain in Ephesus that you may charge some that they teach no other doctrine.” Paul left Timothy at Ephesus to correct those who were teaching false doctrine.

This ministry of Timothy was first recognized by the leaders of the churches in Lystra and Iconium. Acts 16:2-3a says, “He was well spoken of by the brethren who were at Lystra and Iconium. Paul wanted to have him go on with him.” I Timothy 4:14 adds, “Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership.” Paul knew that Timothy would have a good ministry for three reasons. I Timothy 1:5 says, “Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, *from* a good conscience, and *from* sincere faith.” First, Paul knew that as Timothy walked in the Spirit he would be able to serve others in love. Galatians 5:13 says, “For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not *use* liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.” Second Paul knew that Timothy had a clear conscience. Third, Paul knew that Timothy had a genuine faith.

Some Christians had turned away from these three things in their lives. In II Corinthians 11:25 we see that Paul spent a night and a day in the water after a shipwreck. Paul said that the two men mentioned in this chapter had suffered a shipwreck of their faith because they did not maintain a pure heart and a good conscience. In fact it had become necessary for Paul to discipline them as it says that he delivered them to Satan. We see the purpose of delivering a Christian to Satan in I Corinthians 5:5 where we read, “Deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.” Satan is allowed to do whatever he chooses to the body of a disobedient Christian but he cannot touch the spirit because even a disobedient Christian has eternal life. As a result, the spirit of such a person will be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus and that Christian will be taken to heaven.

Paul wanted Timothy to walk in such a way that his life would impact others for eternity. This is the same desire that we should have for our physical and spiritual children. That will happen as we help them develop a pure heart, a good conscience and a genuine faith because their lives will be transformed. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children how to make their lives count for Christ.

3.

Learning to Pray for Others

In our last topic we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to make their lives count for eternity. We saw that will happen as they learn to develop a pure heart, a good conscience and a genuine faith. One of the ways that we can make our lives count for eternity is to learn to pray for others. As a result, we want to provide our children with an example of how to pray for others so that they will also learn the importance of praying for others. That will be the focus of our topic today.

Paul had a great concern to spread the Gospel to people that had not yet heard of the salvation that Christ has provided. He realized that the first thing to do to make it possible to spread the Gospel was to pray. I Timothy 2:1-2 says, "Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, *and* giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence." Here we see that Paul encouraged various kinds of prayer. The word "supplications" speaks about prayer that is the result of a need. The following verses show that those who do not know Christ have a great need for salvation. We want to teach our children to continually pray for their relatives, friends and others that have not yet placed their faith in Christ for salvation and forgiveness of sins.

The word "prayers" speaks about prayer that is addressed to God. Here we see that we want to help our children learn to really pray to God for other people. The word translated "intercessions" means to come close to someone to speak to them about our concerns. Romans 8:26-27 says, "Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit *is*, because He makes intercession for the saints according to *the will of God.*" The Holy Spirit speaks to the Father for us. In the same way we want to speak to the Father for others especially for those who have not yet placed their faith in Christ. Whenever we pray we also need to give thanks to the Lord for the way that He is answering our prayers for others.

We are also told for whom to pray. First, we see that we are to pray for all people. This would include all Christians as well as those who have not yet placed their faith in Christ. Second, we are to pray for those who are in leadership. In addition to praying for kings and rulers of countries, we are to pray for all those who are in authority. All those in authority includes any person or government official that has leadership and exercises authority over other people. Every leader without Christ needs to learn what it means to place his or her faith in Christ. Leaders who place their faith in Christ also make it easier for us to live a quiet and peaceable life. A quiet life means there are not conflicts around us. A peaceable life means that we do not have conflicts within our own life. The only other place this word is used in the New Testament is in I Peter 3:4 where we read, "Rather *let it be* the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible *beauty* of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God." In this verse the word is translated quiet and speaks of a quiet inner spirit. We are also to pray with a spirit of godliness and reverence.

I Timothy 2:3-4 goes on to say, “For this *is* good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.” Here we see that it is good and acceptable to God for us to pray for all people especially those who are in positions of leadership. The word that is translated “good” means that which is good in its character and beneficial in its effects. Here we see why it is important to pray for all those who are not yet Christians. These verses tell us that it is the desire of God for all people to be saved. As a result, we know that we are praying according to the will of God when we pray for the salvation of those who are not Christians. I John 5:14-15 says, “Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.” Since God desires all people to be saved, we know that He hears us when we pray for the salvation of others.

As a part of His desire for all people to be saved, God wants all people to come to the knowledge of the truth. The word that is translated “knowledge” means precise and correct knowledge. Here we see that it is the desire of God for every person to have a precise and correct knowledge of sin and its consequences and also know how to receive forgiveness of sin through repentance and faith in Christ. II Timothy 2:24-26 says, “And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, and *that* they may come to their senses *and escape* the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to *do* his will.” Here we see the attitude that we are to have in order to help people come to a full understanding and knowledge of the truth. As we pray for others and have an attitude of humility as we share the Gospel with others, God will work in their lives. As a result, God will draw some to repentance and faith in Christ.

I Timothy 2:5-7 goes on to say, “For *there is* one God and one Mediator between God and men, *the* Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time, for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle—I am speaking the truth in Christ *and* not lying—a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.” When we have an attitude of pride people will often reject the fact that Christ is the Mediator by whom they can come to God. They reject our message because of our attitude. In contrast, as we pray and have an attitude of humility, they will listen to our message. They will begin to understand that they must come to God through Christ. John 14:6 says, “Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.” God will work through our attitude of humility as people hear us explain the truth in love.

The word that is translated “Mediator” means one that intervenes between two people in order to restore peace and friendship. When Adam sinned he experienced immediate spiritual death which is separation from God. God could not look at sin with favor and yet He still loved all people even though they had become sinners. As a result, God sent Christ to pay the penalty for sin. Hebrews 9:15 says, “And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.” The first covenant was the law and showed that all people are guilty of sin. Christ came to pay the penalty for sin by His death

to buy us back from the penalty of sin. The penalty for sin has been paid and God is satisfied with that payment. He now invites all people to accept the payment of Christ for their sin. Those who repent and turn from their sin by coming to God through Christ receive forgiveness and are restored to a place of peace and friendship with God. Christ could be the Mediator because He is the God-man.

When Christ died He paid the ransom for sin. The word that is translated “ransom” means the price that is paid to redeem us from consequences of the curse of the law. Redemption has three parts. First, Christ bought us back from the penalty of sin. Second, Christ removed us from further sale. Third, Christ set us free. Galatians 3:13-14 says, “Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, “Cursed *is* everyone who hangs on a tree”), that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.” Christ paid the ransom to set us free. When we come to Christ in repentance and faith, at that moment we receive the Holy Spirit through faith.

Here we see that Paul said that he had been appointed a preacher, an apostle and a teacher of the Gentiles. He repeated that same thought in II Timothy 1:11 where we read, “To which I was appointed a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.” A preacher is a person that has been given authority to give and proclaim the official message of a king. Christ gave that same authority to all Christians when He said in Mark 16:15, “And He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.” As a result, each Christian has been given authority to share the Gospel.

Paul was also chosen to be an apostle. Acts 1:21 says that an apostle was an official eyewitness of the resurrection. Paul wrote in II Corinthians 12:11-12, “I have become a fool in boasting; you have compelled me. For I ought to have been commended by you; for in nothing was I behind the most eminent apostles, though I am nothing. Truly the signs of an apostle were accomplished among you with all perseverance, in signs and wonders and mighty deeds.” Paul was also a teacher of the Gentiles. Galatians 2:9 says, “And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that had been given to me, they gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we *should go* to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.” Here we see that the other apostles also recognized that Paul was a teacher of the Gentiles.

I Timothy 2:8 says, “I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.” Here we see that Paul again repeated the fact that he wanted the men to pray everywhere. We are to pray with our sins confessed so that we have holy hands. We are also to pray without anger toward others or with doubts in our own hearts. In the same way we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to pray everywhere for others. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children to learn to pray for others.

4.

Learning How Women Minister Effectively

In our last topic we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to pray for the salvation of others. We saw that one group that we are to pray for is those who are leaders because they are the ones who make it possible for us to live a quiet and peaceable life as we share the Gospel. We also saw that it is the desire of God for all people to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. In our topic today we are going to see that God also shares with women some of the things that they can do to have an effective ministry to others.

In our last topic we concluded that topic by seeing that God wants men to pray everywhere. That verse is closely related to the instructions to women for effective ministry. I Timothy 2:8-10 says, "I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting; in like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing, but, which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works." Just as men are to pray with holy hands because they have confessed their sins, women are also to confess their sins so that they can pray with holy hands. They are also to pray without anger toward others or with doubts in their own hearts.

Paul went on to talk about some of the other things that will help women to minister effectively. He began this section by pointing out the fact that what we are in our hearts is much more important than how we appear on the outside. As a result, he encouraged the women to focus on the attitudes of the heart instead of their outward appearance. The word that is translated "adorn" means to arrange or put in order. I Peter 3:3-5 says, "Do not let your adornment be *merely* outward—arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on *fine* apparel— rather *let it be* the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible *beauty* of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God. For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands." Here we see that both Paul and Peter focused on the inner attitudes rather than the outward appearance.

Often people use their outer appearance to attract attention to self. Paul and Peter make it clear that it is the inner attitudes of a person that will attract people to God. The only other place the word translated modest is used is in I Timothy 3:2 where it is translated of good behavior. That verse says, "A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach." Here we see that people who have the good behavior that either a man or woman are to have will bring glory to God by the things that they do. Paul made it clear that more people would be attracted to the Lord by the good works of a woman than by a woman who wore fancy hairstyles and expensive clothes.

Paul went on to write in I Timothy 2:11-14, "Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression." Here we see that this verse begins with a command when it

says let the woman learn. In the time of the New Testament neither the Jewish nor the Greek culture gave women the opportunity to learn. As a result, the church was the first place where the women were given the opportunity to learn right along with the men. The word that is translated “silence” is translated quietness in II Thessalonians 3:12 where we read, “Now those who are such we command and exhort through our Lord Jesus Christ that they work in quietness and eat their own bread.” In Thessalonica the men who were busybodies were told to work in quietness. Here the women were instructed to learn in quietness since they were being given the opportunity to learn.

We see that there was a very important reason why women were to be given the opportunity to learn the Word of God. Titus 2:3-5 says, “The older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things—that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed.” Here we see that God gave the older women the responsibility to help the younger women in their spiritual growth. The only way that could happen was if the women were given the opportunity to learn the Word of God so that they could teach the next generation of women how to apply the Word of God to their lives. In these verses we see that this teaching was to include practical instruction for the younger women about how to apply Biblical principles in their daily lives. The women were also to learn with a submissive attitude so that they could make their full potential available to the Lord and to their husbands.

However, in making their full potential available to their Lord and to their husbands as well as the church, the women were not to misuse their opportunity to learn to try and control their husbands or the church. The word that is translated “permit” means to allow. The word that is translated “teach” in this verse means to be a teacher. In the context of a meeting of the whole church Paul wrote in I Corinthians 14:34-35, “Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but *they are* to be submissive, as the law also says. And if they want to learn something, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is shameful for women to speak in church.” Instead of asking their questions in the church service, the women were to ask their husbands at home so that the husbands would learn how to explain the Word of God in their homes as a preparation for explaining the Word of God to people in other situations.

At the same time that a woman was not to teach the whole church, she was to be given opportunities to teach in many other situations. We have already seen that the older women were to teach the younger women. In addition, Acts 18:26 says, “So he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.” Here we see that both Aquila and his wife Priscilla were involved in explaining the Word of God to Apollos. As a result, a husband and wife were involved as a teaching team.

In the context of the whole church and with her husband there was one other thing that Paul said the woman was not allowed to do. Here we see that a woman was not to have authority over a man. The word that is translated “have authority” means one who acts on his or her own authority. Matthew 28:18 says, “And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.” Here we see that all authority has been delegated to

Christ by the Father. In I Peter 5:2-3 the elders of the church are told, “Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.” Then I Corinthians 11:3 says, “But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman *is* man, and the head of Christ *is* God.” In the church the elders are to take the leadership and oversight and in the home the husband is to take the leadership and oversight. Both the elders of the church and the husband in the home are to exercise their authority under the authority of Christ and to lead by their godly example.

This exercise of authority by the elders and the husband is delegated to the elders and the husband. Leadership is delegated to the man because he was formed first. Adam failed to exercise that leadership and Eve was the one who was deceived. Men are to take leadership because they are the ones that are held accountable by God for the way that they exercise their delegated authority. Genesis 3:6 says, “So when the woman saw that the tree *was* good for food, that it *was* pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make *one* wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.” Adam failed to take that responsibility even though this verse says that he was right there with his wife. As a result, Adam was the one held accountable in Genesis 3:9-11 where we read, “Then the LORD God called to Adam and said to him, “Where *are* you?” So he said, “I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself.” And He said, “Who told you that you *were* naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?” Part of a husband’s responsibility is to protect his wife from deception.

Although Eve committed sin and was guilty when she disobeyed God, we see that God chose to show His grace to women in a special way. I Timothy 2:15 says, “Nevertheless she will be saved in childbearing if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control.” The word that is translated “she shall be saved” means to save, to preserve, to heal or to restore. Here we see that it talks about the ministry that God gives to mothers who are a part of the church. Because mothers usually spend much more time with children during the early years of their lives than their fathers, they have the privilege to influence the next generation of godly leaders who will provide leadership in the home and in the church.

As a result, mothers are told that they will have a very positive impact as they continue in faith, love and holiness with self-control. According to II Timothy 1:5, Timothy had been greatly influenced by the faith of his mother and grandmother. Mothers also have a great opportunity to demonstrate godly love to their children. Finally, as they exercise self-control so that they live a godly life, they will give their children an example to follow. May the Lord richly bless you as you help women to learn to minister effectively in the church and in the home.

5.

Learning to Become Qualified for Spiritual Leadership – Part I

In our last topic we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn how to help women learn to minister effectively in the church and in the home. We saw that God has a great ministry for godly women who desire to allow the Lord to work through their lives as they follow the instructions of the Lord. In our next two topics we are going to see that Paul told Timothy how to help men become qualified for leadership in the church.

In I Timothy 3:1 we read, “This *is* a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work.” The first word that is translated “desire” means to reach out for something and describes an action. The second word that is translated “desire” means to have a strong inner desire for something and describes an attitude. If it is a negative desire it is translated lust. If it is a positive desire it means a strong desire to please God. This word is used in a positive sense in Luke 22:15 where Christ said, “Then He said to them, “*With fervent desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.*” Here we see that if a man has a strong desire to please God (the inner attitude) that it will cause him to work to become qualified for spiritual leadership (the outward action). We want to help our children work to become qualified for spiritual leadership.

In Titus 1:5 Paul wrote Titus, “For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you—. One of the most important questions that we should ask is, “Was Titus left to qualify people for spiritual leadership or disqualify them?” Since the island of Crete is 160 miles long and had quite a number of cities, we see that the primary ministry of Titus was to help people become qualified for spiritual leadership. That is still the primary responsibility of every godly leader. This means that our goal as a spiritual leader is to help new Christians grow and mature until they become full partners in ministry. Timothy was given that same responsibility in Ephesus and the surrounding area. As a result, the rest of this topic and the next topic will explain our goal as we help our physical and spiritual children grow to spiritual maturity and full partnership in ministry.

Acts 14:23 says, “So when they had appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.” Here we see that Paul and Barnabas had qualified a group of two or more men to lead every church that they had established and they were called elders. In Acts 20:17 Paul began his farewell to the elders in the church at Ephesus. Then Acts 20:28 says, “Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.” In Titus 1:7 Paul used the word bishop to describe the same people that he called elders in Titus 1:5. The words bishops, elders and overseers are used interchangeably because they are all talking about the leadership team of a local church. As a result, the qualifications that we will study in this topic are the qualifications for the leadership team in a local church.

In Exodus 18:20 Moses was given the three things that he was to do to develop godly leaders for Israel. That verse says, “And you shall teach them the statutes and the laws, and show them the way in which they must walk and the work they must do.” Here we see that Moses was to qualify leaders by:

1. Teaching them the Word of God – knowledge
2. Showing them the way to walk – godly character
3. Showing them how to do the work – ministry skills

The first thing that we notice about the qualifications for spiritual leadership in the church is that they are primarily character qualifications. We show people the way to walk by our example but they must also choose to follow that example. In contrast, knowledge and ministry skills can be taught once people choose to follow our example.

In I Timothy 3:2-3 we read, “A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach; not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous.” The very first qualification listed here for spiritual leadership is that a man must be blameless. This qualification really summarizes the entire list as the rest of the qualifications all explain what it means to be blameless. The word translated “blameless” means that which cannot be laid hold of. This means that there is no obvious sin with which the person could be charged. The first institution that God established was marriage. Genesis 2:24 says, “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.” The husband of one wife means that a man demonstrates his oneness with his wife by his thoughts, attitudes, words and actions because he is faithful in all ways to his wife or to the future wife that the Lord might give him if he is not yet married. We might call him a one woman man.

Temperate means free from wine. Proverbs 31:4-5 says, “*It is* not for kings, O Lemuel, *It is* not for kings to drink wine, nor for princes intoxicating drink; lest they drink and forget the law, and pervert the justice of all the afflicted.” A godly leader is to be free from wine so that he can think clearly. That way he does not forget the Word of God or change justice toward those suffering from affliction or poverty. Sober-minded means one who exercises self-control in all areas of his life. The word that is translated “of good behavior” means orderly and speaks about a person who disciplines his personal life so that the things that he does will bring glory to God. Hospitable means that a person uses his home to make people comfortable so that he can minister to them effectively.

The word that is translated able to teach is only used here and in II Timothy 2:24. In II Timothy 2:24-25 we read, “And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth.” Here we see that a spiritual leader is to be able to teach with humility so that he can correct those who are in opposition to the Word of God without arguing with them. This is a key difference between the qualifications for an elder and those for a deacon.

The next several things listed all point out the way that a godly leader is to lead by example. Ephesians 5:18 says, “And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit.” In order for a godly leader to provide an example he must be controlled by the Holy

Spirit instead of being controlled by wine. Not violent means a godly leader is not a person who fights or argues. I Timothy 6:10 says, “For the love of money is a root of all *kinds of* evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.” Not greedy for money means a godly leader provides an example because he is content with what the Lord provides for him and is not greedy for more.

A godly leader is also a godly leader with his family. I Timothy 3:4-5 says, “One who rules his own house well, having *his* children in submission with all reverence (for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?).” The word that is translated “rules” means one that has been set over something as a protector or guardian. In addition to the places where the word is translated rules, this word is also used in Titus 3:8 and 3:14 where it is translated maintain. Titus 3:8 says, “This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you to affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable to men.” As the protector and guardian of his family a man is to show his family by his example how to lead through good works.

When a father leads his family through good works, it becomes much easier for the children to respond to his leadership with submission and respect. Ephesians 5:21 says, “Submitting to one another in the fear of God.” Then it gives six illustrations of what it means to submit. The fourth illustration tell fathers how to submit to their children when it says in Ephesians 6:4, “And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.” When fathers provoke their children to wrath, they are failing to follow the Biblical requirement to submit to one another in the fear of God. If a father leads his children by love and example, they will learn to lead others by love and example. When a father drives his children by his anger and their fear, his children often become rebellious. The same will happen in the church.

Two final qualifications are given in I Timothy 3:6-7 where we read, “Not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the *same* condemnation as the devil. Moreover he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.” A novice is a person that is a new or immature Christian. The sin that caused Satan to fall was his pride. Pride is the very thing that Satan has used to bring about the downfall of many powerful leaders including Babylon (Isaiah 14) and Tyre (Ezekiel 28). Satan and his pride are described in both passages. Ezekiel 28:17 says, “Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor; I cast you to the ground, I laid you before kings, that they might gaze at you.” Satan continues to use pride to try and get Christian leaders to fall.

The final qualification for godly spiritual leadership is the fact that leaders in the church must have a good reputation among those who are not Christians. Otherwise such a person will be caught in the trap of Satan and have no impact for the Lord. We want to be an example to our physical and spiritual children to help them develop these characteristics so that they become qualified as spiritual leaders. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children develop and become godly spiritual leaders.

6.

Learning to Become Qualified for Spiritual Leadership – Part II

In our last topic we saw the qualifications that we want to help our physical and spiritual children develop in their lives in order to help them become godly spiritual leaders. We saw that those qualifications were the qualifications for the spiritual leadership team of a local church. We also saw that the words used to describe those leaders were elders, bishops or overseers. They are to lead people and not drive them. A person leads by love and example while a person drives by fear or even anger. In this topic we are going to see the qualifications for deacons and discuss some of the differences between deacons and elders in the local church.

Acts 2:46 says, “So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart.” Five times in the first five chapters of Acts we see that the church was of one accord. Then we see a sudden change in Acts 6:1. In Acts 6:1 we read, “Now in those days, when *the number of* the disciples was multiplying, there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution.” Suddenly we see that there were complaints in the church. At this point the church was all Jewish. However, the Hellenist (Greek) speaking Jews had a complaint against the Hebrew speaking Jews. The Greek speaking widows were being neglected when food was distributed to the widows. To solve this problem we see that all seven of the men who were appointed have Greek names so they were probably all Hellenists.

The apostles probably remembered how Christ had begun to share responsibilities with them to help them develop their leadership. At the feeding of the five thousand Christ had multiplied the food but he had given the twelve the responsibility to pass out the food. As a result, the apostles said they should not add distributing food to their primary responsibilities. Instead Acts 6:3-4 says, “Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of *good* reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.” The word translated “deacons” means to serve and was used in the New Testament to describe those who cared for the poor and distributed the money collected for their use. As a result, deacons are those who serve with the elders and take care of any responsibilities that the elders delegate to them.

As a result, we want to give our children opportunities to serve other Christians in ways that will benefit the entire church. In order to help them become qualified to lead in such ministries we want to develop godly character in their lives. That is why I Timothy 3:8-10 says, “Likewise deacons *must be* reverent, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy for money, holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience. But let these also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons, being *found* blameless.” The word that is translated “reverent” is used four times in the New Testament and means those who are respected for their godly mind and character.

The word that is translated “double-tongued” means people who say one thing to one person

and something different to another in an effort to deceive. Since deacons are not to be double-tongued it means that they are honest in the things that they say. Deacons are not to be individuals who spend time drinking. They are not to be greedy for money. This word is only used three times in the New Testament and the other two times are in the qualifications for elders in I Timothy 3:3 and Titus 2:7. This would also be important for deacons as well as elders since elders often delegate responsibilities that involve the handling of money to deacons.

We also see certain qualifications are a part of developing deacons for future spiritual leadership. The word translated “holding” means to have or to be closely joined to a person or thing. The word translated “mystery” speaks of something that was hidden in the Old Testament that is revealed in the New Testament. The faith was used to refer to the teachings about Christ and the salvation that we have through Him. As a result, these words together speak about a person who firmly holds to the teachings about Christ that are revealed to us in the New Testament. II Timothy 2:22 says, “Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.” Here we see that a pure conscience is the result of pursuing righteousness, faith, love and peace from the heart. Both deacons and elders are to hold to the Biblical teachings that cause their lives to be transformed.

The word translated “tested or proved” means to examine a person’s beliefs and godly character to make certain that his godly character and beliefs are genuine. Ephesians 5:8-10 says, “For you were once darkness, but now *you are* light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of the Spirit *is* in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), finding out what is acceptable to the Lord.” Those who have developed godly character in their lives will begin to bear the fruit of the Spirit. As a result, when the lives of men begin to demonstrate the fruit of the Spirit it is time to give them opportunities to serve the whole church because of the fact that their lives have been found blameless.

We also see that the way that men lead their wife and family tells us many things about their progress in growing toward spiritual leadership. I Timothy 3:11-13 says, “Likewise *their* wives *must be* reverent, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things. Let deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling *their* children and their own houses well. For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a good standing and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.” Just like elders, we see that a key place for a man to develop his spiritual leadership is in the home. We saw in the qualifications for elders that the word translated “rules” means one who has been set over something as a protector or guardian. As a result, men are to learn to lead and protect their families well so that there will be honor instead of blame. One additional thing that the wife is to avoid is slander. The word “slander” means to accuse falsely. Here we see that the husband and wife often serve the Lord as a team and this is an area where a wife has to learn to keep quiet and avoid gossip about sensitive situations.

Deacons that have a good ministry preserve for themselves a good standing and great boldness in the faith. A good standing speaking of the fact that deacons who serve well gain the respect of the entire church. They also gain great freedom to speak and share with boldness the faith that we receive in Christ Jesus because their words and their actions are in agreement. Since one of the key differences in the requirements for deacons and elders is being able to teach the

Word of God we see that deacons who are faithful in serving the Lord are also developing the ability to teach the Word of God to others with boldness. This principle is illustrated by Stephen in Acts 6:9-10 as well as the entire chapter of Acts 7. Acts 6:9-10 says, "Then there arose some from what is called the Synagogue of the Freedmen (Cyrenians, Alexandrians, and those from Cilicia and Asia), disputing with Stephen. And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke." This would have been the synagogue that included Saul.

I Timothy 3:14-16 says, "These things I write to you, though I hope to come to you shortly; but if I am delayed, *I write* so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up in glory." Paul looked forward to visiting Timothy so that they could minister to one another. However, Paul was uncertain when he would reach Ephesus so had written this letter to guide Timothy in his ministry.

Paul wanted Timothy to know how to conduct himself in the house of God or the house where God lives. Since there were not church buildings for the first three hundred years of the church, he was certainly not talking about a building. I Corinthians 6:19-20 says, "Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit *who is* in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's." Christians are the temple or the house where God lives. Galatians 6:10 says, "Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith." Paul wanted Timothy to know how to do good especially to all those who were a part of the household of faith. In the same way, we want to help our children learn to do good to all especially to those who are Christians and a part of the household of faith. A physical temple or building had pillars and a foundation. We as Christians are the parts of the temple of God built on the foundation of Christ and we are to share the truth of the Word of God.

Paul concluded this section with an early hymn that gave a summary of what we believe. God wants to develop godliness in our lives. Christ became flesh and lived among us. We have been justified because we have been declared righteous in the sight of the Father because the righteousness of Christ has been placed upon us. Christ has been seen by angels because He is now in heaven. Christ said that this message is to be preached among all the nations beginning at Jerusalem and going to the very end of the earth. It is the plan of God for people of every nation and group of people in the world to have the opportunity to hear so that there will be some from every nation and tongue in heaven. Christ was taken up into heaven and He is now seated at the right hand of the Father where He is making intercession for each one of us. The things in this early hymn are all things that we want to help our children understand so that they become equipped to teach them to others. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children become qualified to serve the Lord more effectively.

7.

Learning How to Teach Sound Doctrine

In our last two topics we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn how to become qualified to help the church in its growth and development. We saw that most of the qualifications for spiritual leadership deal with the development of godly character. As Christians develop godly character, others will listen to what they say because they see how the Lord is transforming their lives. In our topic today we are to see how to help our children learn to teach sound doctrine.

One reason why it is important to teach our children how to teach sound doctrine is due to the fact that God warned that there will be some who will depart from the faith. In I Timothy 4:1-3 we read, “Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, forbidding to marry, *and commanding* to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.” Several years earlier Paul had spoken to the elders of the church at Ephesus in Acts 20:29-30 and said, “For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.” Here we see that the Spirit has shown this to Paul at an earlier time. Timothy was now to remind the elders since he was in Ephesus.

The phrase “latter times” speaks of the period of time from the time Christ went to heaven after the resurrection until His return. The word translated “some will depart” is explained more fully in Hebrews 3:12 where we read, “Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God.” Here we see that people who depart from the faith are people who were professing Christians who deceived others for a time but actually still had an evil heart of unbelief. Since such individuals never had a true faith, they leave and go away from what they have heard about the meaning of true faith. Instead they begin to turn their attention to seducing (deceiving) spirits and doctrines of demons. Such individuals became false teachers in the time of the New Testament and still often become false teachers today.

We also see the teachings of such false teachers. We see that it does not bother such false teachers to speak lies in order to deceive. Hypocrisy was the word that described actors in a play who placed a mask over their face and then spoke like the face that they were wearing. Then they would change to a different mask and speak in a totally different way. The reason it does not bother such false teachers to speak lies is due to the fact that they have seared their conscience with a hot iron. A hot iron burns so completely that it does not even bother the conscience of these false teachers because they want to deceive others with these doctrines of demons.

Two common false teachings throughout the history of the church are false teachers who forbid others to marry as a way to earn their salvation or forbidding people to eat certain foods to earn

their salvation. Here we see that both types of false teaching cause people to think that they can earn their salvation by their own works. In contrast, we want to help our children understand that God is the One who created marriage when He brought Eve to Adam in the Garden on Eden. Genesis 2:22 says, “Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man.” God is also the One who created all foods for us to eat. Genesis 9:3 says, “Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. I have given you all things, even as the green herbs.” In these verses we see that both marriage and all foods are given by God for us. As a result, true believers give thanks to God for both marriage and food.

I Timothy 4:4-5 says, “For every creature of God *is* good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.” Here we see why true Christians can enjoy marriage and enjoy all foods and do not need to be deceived by false teachers. Every thing that God created is good. John 1:1-3 says, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.” The Father willed all things and Christ brought all things into existence. Genesis 1:31 says, “Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed *it was* very good. So the evening and the morning were the sixth day.” As a result, we see that everything that God created is good.

We also see that nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving. The word that is translated “refused” means to throw something away because it is unclean. Peter had to learn not to refuse what God provided when God spoke to him in Acts 10:15 and said, “And a voice *spoke* to him again the second time, “What God has cleansed you must not call common.” Instead we are to take what God provides and thank Him for it. In setting aside the instructions given to Moses about unclean animals to keep Israel a separate nation until Christ came, we see that God has provided all food for us to eat. Jewish Christians are still free to avoid eating those things because Acts 21:20 says, “And when they heard *it*, they glorified the Lord. And they said to him, “You see, brother, how many myriads of Jews there are who have believed, and they are all zealous for the law.” Jewish Christians can be zealous for the law and chose not to eat foods that were temporarily unclean according to the Law of Moses. As Gentile Christians we are not under the law and are free to eat all foods. Acts 21:25 says, “But concerning the Gentiles who believe, we have written *and* decided that they should observe no such thing, except that they should keep themselves from *things* offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality.” We are able to enjoy our freedom in Christ.

I Timothy 4:6-10 says, “If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine which you have carefully followed. But reject profane and old wives’ fables, and exercise yourself toward godliness. For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come. This *is* a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance. For to this *end* we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is *the* Savior of all men, especially of those who believe.” Timothy was told that he was to explain these things to the Christians in Ephesus so that they could understand them clearly and not be deceived by false teachers. Paul said Timothy would have a very effective ministry for Christ if he would teach these things to the Christians in Ephesus so

that they would be spiritually fed with the words of faith and the good doctrine that Timothy had been taught by Paul and which Timothy demonstrated to others by his own example.

At the same time that Timothy was teaching sound doctrine and providing an example of godly living, he was also to avoid adding other teachings that had crept into the church in Ephesus. The word that is translated “profane” means the ideas and thoughts of ungodly men. Later in II Timothy 2:16 Paul told Timothy, “But shun profane *and* idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness.” Here we see that the teachings of ungodly men result in people becoming more ungodly. A second kind of false teaching was old wives fables. The word that is translated fables is the word from which we get our English word myths. In II Timothy 4:3-4 Paul warned Timothy, “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, *because* they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn *their* ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.” May people today would much rather hear things that tickle their ears and make them feel good rather than hear the sound doctrine of the Word of God.

Timothy was told to exercise himself toward godliness. The word that is translated “exercise” talked about the physical preparation that people did to prepare for things like the Isthmian Games or the Olympic Games and involved a high level of self-discipline. Paul encouraged Timothy here to exercise that same kind of self-discipline in his spiritual growth. We want to encourage our children to do the same. We see that self-discipline for physical exercise does provide some benefits for our lives. However, self-discipline for growing in godliness is beneficial in all areas of our lives. This self-discipline for spiritual growth provides spiritual benefits for the time that we are living on this earth. It also provides eternal benefits that will last forever. As I Corinthians 10:31 says, “Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.” The statement, “This is a faithful saying” points to the fact that godliness is profitable for all things is an important statement for our lives. We want to make godliness the goal for our own lives and show our children by our example that godliness is profitable for them in their lives.

Since godliness is so important Paul was willing to work to the point where he was exhausted and even experience false accusations against him to help his spiritual children grow in godliness. Paul did that because he knew that his trust was in the living God. I Timothy 6:17 says, “Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy.” Riches are uncertain but we can place our faith in the living God. All people benefit from the blessings of God in this life but those who have placed their faith in Christ will experience those blessings for all eternity. This is a key lesson that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to understand and explain. Then they can help people realize that they face a choice. Each person must choose whether he or she wants to enjoy those blessings only for this life or if that person wants to turn to Christ as his or her Savior and enjoy those blessings for all eternity. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to teach and explain sound doctrine.

8.

Learning How to Model Sound Doctrine

In our last topic we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to teach and explain sound doctrine. We saw that there were false teachers in the time of Timothy and there are false teachers today. Unless our children understand sound doctrine it will be easy for them to be deceived. As they learn to explain sound doctrine they are able to protect others from deception. However, to be effective in teaching others, they must model what they teach by their own example. That will be the focus of our topic today.

In I Timothy 4:11-12 we read, “These things command and teach. Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity.” The word that is translated “command” means to command, to charge or to pass along a message from one to another. Here we see that Paul was instructing Timothy to pass along the instructions in this book to the Christians in Ephesus and the surrounding area. Timothy was also to teach and explain the things that he was passing along from Paul. Later Paul would tell Timothy in II Timothy 2:2, “And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.” Timothy was to teach and explain the things he taught so well that faithful men would be able to pass those teachings on to others as well.

However, Timothy was still a young man. Many of those that he would be teaching were much older in age than he was. As a result, Paul knew that the only way these older people would listen to the teaching of Timothy was if they saw that he was living a godly life. Younger people would only follow what he was teaching if he was living what he taught. That is why Paul stressed the importance of leading by example. The word that is translated “example” means a life that can be imitated. Paul said a similar thing to Titus in Titus 2:7-8 where we read, “In all things showing yourself *to be* a pattern of good works; in doctrine *showing* integrity, reverence, incorruptibility, sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you.” The word that is translated example in I Timothy is the word that is translated pattern in Titus. We also want to teach our children to lead by example.

Paul gave Timothy six areas in which his life was to be an example. First, he was to be an example in word. Here we see that he was to be an example by the way that he talked and the words that he said. Second, he was to be an example in conduct. Conduct speaks of behavior. James 3:13 says, “Who *is* wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct *that* his works *are done* in the meekness of wisdom.” Godly conduct will cause people to realize that a person is wise. Third, Timothy was to be an example of love. In John 13:34-35 Christ told the disciples, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” The thing that causes other Christians to really realize that we are led by Christ in our lives is if they see that we love them as Christ loves them.

Fourth, Timothy was to be an example in spirit. At the moment of salvation the Holy Spirit comes into our human spirit. Galatians 5:16 says, "I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh." As we walk in the Spirit, the Holy Spirit gives our human spirit the power to have victory over sin at each moment that we are yielding our human spirit to the Holy Spirit. Fifth, Timothy was to be an example of faith. II Corinthians 5:7 says, "For we walk by faith, not by sight." Later Paul told Timothy in II Timothy 1:13 "Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus." When we walk in faith we will hold to sound teaching. Sixth, Timothy was to be an example of purity. Timothy was to be an example of purity in all areas of his life especially in moral purity. These six things all point to the fact that Timothy was to lead by example in his personal life.

Timothy was also to provide an example by his ministry. I Timothy 4:13-14 says, "Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership." Here we see that Timothy was to lead by example in his public ministry. The word that is translated "give attention" means to take heed or to do something. Acts 20:28 says, "Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood." Here we see that the elders in Ephesus were to pay attention to their own lives as well as the lives of all of the other Christians. Timothy was to make sure that he did certain things in his ministry.

First, he was to give attention to the public reading of the Word of God. Hebrews 4:12 says, "For the word of God *is* living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." Then Romans 10:17 adds, "So then faith *comes* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." The Word of God is much more powerful than our words. As a result, Timothy was told to make sure that he used every opportunity to read the Word of God instead of giving his own words or opinions.

Second, Timothy was to give attention to exhortation. The word translated "exhortation" means to encourage, to comfort or to strengthen. These things are often done by helping people apply the Word of God to their own lives. Romans 15:4 says, "For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." We give people encouragement, comfort and help to strengthen them when we share the Word of God with them and help them apply the Word to their daily lives.

Third, Timothy was to give attention to doctrine. The word that is translated "doctrine" means doctrine, teaching or instruction. Titus 2:1-2 says, "But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine: that the older men be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience." When sound doctrine is taught, it produces a foundation that results in a person developing a sound faith and a godly life. That is why Timothy was told later in II Timothy 3:16-17, "All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work." Doctrine along with reproof, correction and instruction in righteousness will develop men of God that are equipped for every good work.

Fourth, Timothy was to exercise his spiritual gift. This spiritual gift was understood through the Word of God and was probably recognized by the leadership of the churches where Timothy was serving the Lord when he was invited to join Paul in Acts 16:1-5. That gift is identified in II Timothy 4:5 where we read, “But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.” Here we see that Timothy had the gift of evangelist. That gift and others are defined in Ephesians 4:11-13 where we read, “And He Himself gave some *to be* apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.” Apostles gave us eyewitness testimony of the resurrection of Christ (Acts 1:21-22). Prophets gave us the written Word of God (II Peter 1:19-21). Those two gifts provide the foundation of the church (Ephesians 2:19-20). Evangelists equip the saints to share the Gospel. Pastors (shepherds) equip the saints to minister to one another. Teachers equip the saints to teach and apply the Word of God.

I Timothy 4:15-16 goes on to say, “Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all. Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.” Here we see that Timothy was to continue to meditate on (think about and put into practice in his daily life) the things that Paul had written to him. Although Paul and Timothy had become full partners in ministry, Paul was able to help Timothy continue in his spiritual growth because they had different spiritual gifts. That is why we all need one another because we are to continue to learn from one another. Paul said that as Timothy put these things into practice in his daily life that his continuing growth that was helping him to become more like Christ would be recognized by the other Christians. The same will be true in our own lives and in the lives of our children.

Take heed means to pay attention to. Paul encouraged Timothy to pay attention to two things. First was his own continuing spiritual growth. As we continue to grow and become more like Christ, our lives will have an ever increasing impact on the lives of others. We will be able to say as Paul said in I Corinthians 11:1, “Imitate me, just as I also *imitate* Christ.” Second was his growth in understanding the teaching about Christ. Here we see that throughout the rest of our lives that we need to have a learner’s attitude so that we continue to grow in our spiritual maturity. Paul told Timothy that as he continued to focus on his own personal growth and on his growth in understanding and applying the Word of God that his personal development would cause his ministry to have a growing impact on the lives of those who heard him. The same thing is true for our physical and spiritual children. As they continue to grow spiritually and in their understanding and application of the Word of God, others will grow also. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children how to model sound doctrine by their lives.

9.

Learning to Show Respect to Those who are Older

In our last topic we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children continue to grow spiritually so that their lives and ministry will have a greater and greater impact. That will happen as they see that we are continuing to grow spiritually in our own lives. We also saw that we want to help our children grow in their ministry as they learn to share the Word of God more and more effectively. In our topic today we will see that we want to help our children learn how to show respect and help others learn to show respect to those who are older. Of course that must also be modeled by example.

In I Timothy 5:1-2 we read, “Do not rebuke an older man, but exhort *him* as a father, younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, younger as sisters, with all purity.” Timothy was dealing with certain problem situations in the church at Ephesus. As a result, Paul gave him instructions about how to talk to the people that were involved in those situations. Since Timothy was fairly young, he would be talking to people who were older than he was in some cases. Galatians 6:1 says, “Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who *are* spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.” Timothy had worked with Paul long enough to know that the goal is always to restore when sin is involved. This was always to be done with a spirit of gentleness.

In dealing with a situation involving an older man, Timothy was not to rebuke. The word that is translated “rebuke” means to speak with harsh words. The word that is translated “to exhort” means to come to one’s side to strengthen or to encourage. Paul demonstrated this attitude when he wrote to Philemon in Philemon 1:8-9 and said, “Therefore, though I might be very bold in Christ to command you what is fitting, *yet* for love’s sake I rather appeal *to you*—being such a one as Paul, the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ—.” The proper attitude when dealing with sin or problems will cause people to be much more open to the correction of the Lord. We also want to help our children learn to treat older people with respect.

We see that same respect was to be shown with all people. If Timothy was dealing with a younger man, Timothy was to treat him like a brother because he is a brother in Christ. The word that is translated “younger” for both men and women refers to those who are new or younger. When Ananias died we read in Acts 5:6, “And the young men arose and wrapped him up, carried *him* out, and buried *him*.” Here we see that the word refers to men who are young adults. Older women were to be treated as mothers. Timothy was to treat the younger men as brothers and the younger women as sisters. This was to be done with all purity. This word refers to purity in all areas of life but especially moral purity.

After mentioning the older women, Paul went on to mention those women who had become widows. I Timothy 5:3-4 says, “Honor widows who are really widows. But if any widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show piety at home and to repay their parents; for this is good and acceptable before God.” The word translated “honor” means to place a high value on someone. Ephesians 6:2-3 says, “Honor your father and mother,” which is the

first commandment with promise: “that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.” Care and respect are to be shown to all widows but especially those who are widows without any family such as widows who have no children or grandchildren.

If a widow had children or grandchildren then those children or grandchildren were to be shown how to show respect toward their mother or grandmother. Part of that respect is learning to provide food and other basic needs. This is one way that children or grandchildren can repay their mother for bringing them into the world and raising them to physical maturity. It is also a way to show the love and concern that was shown to them as they grew up as children. The only other place this word for parents is used is in II Timothy 1:3 where the word is translated forefathers, “I thank God, whom I serve with a pure conscience, as *my* forefathers *did*, as without ceasing I remember you in my prayers night and day.” Since this verse mentions that this is a way to repay parents this means that the same instructions would apply to those who have fathers, grandfathers or great-grandparents who are no longer able to provide for their basic needs.

However some widows or other elderly forefathers may not have any descendents to provide for their basic needs. Basic needs may vary in different cultures. In such cases we see that the church is to view this as an opportunity for ministry. The phrase “this is good and acceptable” is used twice in the New Testament. The other use is in I Timothy 2:3 where we read, “For this *is* good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior.” The previous verses encourage us to pray for all people and especially for those who are in leadership. Here we see that just as we are to pray for all people and for our leaders, we are also to minister to the elderly in the church who have no one to care for them. This is part of our ministry of showing respect for those who are older.

We go on to read in I Timothy 5:5-6, “Now she who is really a widow, and left alone, trusts in God and continues in supplications and prayers night and day. But she who lives in pleasure is dead while she lives.” Here we see that these verses go on to talk about widows and other elderly Christians who have no family to support them and provide for their needs. Such individuals are often left alone and forgotten by the world. These individuals show their faith in the Lord by the fact that they wait for the Lord to provide for their needs with confidence in the Lord. When they have a need, they bring their requests to the Lord. At the same time they continue to pray to the Lord for others. In fact many elderly Christians devote their time to prayer to the Lord for others. As one elderly widow said to me, “By the time I get done praying for all the people I know and their needs, it is already evening.”

In contrast, some widows focus on their own desires instead of praying for the needs of others. The word that is translated “pleasure” means those who live in luxury seeking only to please self. This word is used only one other time in the New Testament and that is in James 5:5 where we read, “You have lived on the earth in pleasure and luxury; you have fattened your hearts as in a day of slaughter.” Here we see that those who live only to please self are individuals who have never placed their faith in Christ because the only thing to which they can look forward is the day of slaughter or destruction. We see that such a widow or other elderly person is spiritually dead even though that person may have physical life. Ephesians 2:1 says, “And you *He made alive*, who were dead in trespasses and sins.” An elderly individual who is

spiritually dead certainly needs concerned Christians who will share with that individual how to have spiritual life.

In I Timothy 5:7-8 we read, “And these things command, that they may be blameless. But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.” Here we see that Paul told Timothy to explain to those who were younger that the Lord gave this as a command to help those who are younger know how to show love to those who are older. In John 13:34-35 Christ told the disciples, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. “By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

Christ repeated that command and explained the greatness of His love when He said later that evening in John 15:12-14, “This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. “Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends. “You are My friends if you do whatever I command you.” Here we see that Christ said that He showed His love for us by laying down His life for us by dying on the cross. Then He said that we show that we are His friends by obeying what He commands us to do. In this verse in I Timothy we see that we are commanded to minister to the needs of those who are truly widows.

Some of the Christians in Ephesus were not even taking care of the widows that were a part of their own household. Paul explained to Timothy what to tell such individuals. Paul said that such individuals had denied the faith. Galatians 5:13 says, “For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not *use* liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.” Those who were neglecting widows that were a part of their own household were using their liberty as an opportunity to be selfish and neglect the widows in their family. That is not liberty. Instead that is sin. We are given the liberty or freedom to serve one another in love.

Since some of the Christians were misusing their liberty and committing sin instead, Paul said that such individuals had denied the faith by their actions. The word that is translated “denied” means to act entirely different than a person normally does. This word is used in John 18:35 and 18:27. John 18:27 says, “Peter then denied again; and immediately a rooster crowed.” Peter was bold when he was standing next to the Lord a few hours earlier but he denied Christ three times when he was depending on his own strength. This verse says that a Christian that does not meet the needs of his household is worse than a person that is not a Christian. We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to show respect and love for all older Christians and especially for older Christians from their own family. Galatians 6:10 says, “Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.” We want to show our children by our example how to show respect to family members and to all Christians. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to show respect to those who are older.

10.

Learning When the Church is to Provide for Widows

In our last topic we saw that we are to help our physical and spiritual children learn to show respect for older people and especially older individuals from their own family. We saw that we are to meet the needs of family members who are a part of our household. We also saw that there are some widows and other elderly Christians who have no family to provide for their needs. That is an opportunity for the church to meet the needs of those individuals. Today we are going to see when the church is to provide for the needs of the widows that have no families.

There was an age qualification that a church was to consider as it made arrangements to supply the needs of the widows. I Timothy 5:9-10 says, “Do not let a widow under sixty years old be taken into the number, *and not unless* she has been the wife of one man, well reported for good works: if she has brought up children, if she has lodged strangers, if she has washed the saints’ feet, if she has relieved the afflicted, if she has diligently followed every good work.” In the New Testament times a widow that was sixty or more years in age seldom had an opportunity to marry another husband. As a result, the church was to consider this as the age when they would start to support widows that had no families.

Some widows were also to have the opportunity for a special ministry to the younger women and were to be put on a special list of ministering widows. Titus 2:3-5 says, “The older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things—that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed.” Here we see that these older women were given a special ministry of teaching younger women. The characteristics to get on this list were such that they could lead younger women by example as well as by what they taught the younger women.

Like the qualifications that were given for elders who provide leadership to the church, we see that such a widow was to be a one-man woman. This meant that she was a good example because she had been faithful to her husband in her thoughts, attitudes, words and actions. She was to be a woman that was known for her good works. Dorcas was such a woman. Acts 9:39 says, “Then Peter arose and went with them. When he had come, they brought *him* to the upper room. And all the widows stood by him weeping, showing the tunics and garments which Dorcas had made while she was with them.” Here we see that she had been known for her good works to help other widows.

Another way that such a woman had ministered was by the way that she had brought up children. This normally spoke of those who had brought up physical children. However, a woman like Priscilla might only have had spiritual children. Acts 18:26 says, “So he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.” Here we see that Apollos was an adult who

needed some spiritual parents to help him understand the way of God more accurately. Many widows have had a similar ministry. Whether physical or spiritual children, these would be children that were serving the Lord in other places.

The next way that some women ministered to others was by lodging strangers. Here we see that this talks about a woman who has used her home as a place of ministry. I Peter 4:9 says, “*Be hospitable to one another without grumbling.*” In the time of the New Testament many places did not have an inn where people could stay. As a result, Christians who were traveling from area to another would often be invited by other Christians to stay with them as they traveled even though the travelers might be strangers.

Women also ministered by washing the feet of the saints. In wealthy homes servants were often the ones who washed the feet of others. However, many people did not have servants. Here we see that godly women often followed the example of Christ when He washed the feet of His disciples. Christ said in John 13:13-15 we read, “You call me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for *so* I am. If I then, *your* Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you.” Here we see that widows in the church who had followed the example of Christ were showing an attitude of humility.

Other women had shown an attitude of humility as they ministered to the afflicted. James 1:27 says, “Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, *and* to keep oneself unspotted from the world.” Now that these women were widows themselves and no longer had family responsibilities, they were women who already had been ministering to other Christians in this way. Since the word afflicted can speak about any type of trouble or distress woman have ministered in many different ways to meet the needs of the afflicted.

Finally there were widows who had imitated the example of Christ by doing good whenever they had the opportunity to do good. When Peter talked about Christ in the house of Cornelius, he said in Acts 10:38, “How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.” Here we see that Christ went about doing good. Galatians 6:9-10 says, “And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.” In addition to helping our children develop a concern for the widows, we want to help them learn to do the things that we see that the godly women had done before they became widows.

In contrast, we see that many younger widows had chosen to do other things. I Timothy 5:11-13 says, “But refuse *the* younger widows; for when they have begun to grow wanton against Christ, they desire to marry, having condemnation because they have cast off their first faith. And besides they learn *to be* idle, wandering about from house to house, and not only idle but also gossips and busybodies, saying things which they ought not.” Here we see why younger widows were not to be put on this special list of widows. The word that is translated, “they have begun to grow wanton against Christ” means that when they begin to feel the impulses of

sensual desires” younger widows might develop a strong desire to get married again. In other cases if the church was supporting them some would cast off their first faith.

If the church provided support for young widows that were in good health, that it would be easy for them to learn habits that could hurt the church. The word that is translated “learn” means to learn by practice. Here we see three sinful habits that individuals can learn when they have a lot of extra time because others provide for their needs. First, we see that some individuals can learn to be lazy (idle). Second, some just begin to wander from house to house. Third, some begin to gossip. Fourth, some do not mind their own business. As a result, such individuals begin to talk about others and say things about others that are not proper.

As a result, Paul gave instructions to the younger widows. I Timothy 5:14-16 says, “Therefore I desire that *the* younger widows marry, bear children, manage the house, give no opportunity to the adversary to speak reproachfully. For some have already turned aside after Satan. If any believing man or woman has widows, let them relieve them, and do not let the church be burdened, that it may relieve those who are really widows.” Here we see that Paul realized that many younger widows would eventually desire to marry again rather than remain as a widow. He wanted them to be free to marry again. He wanted then to have the opportunity to have children. The word that is translated “manage the house” means to rule the household. Here we see that a wife has the responsibility for the oversight of the household. The goal for all women was that they would not cause those who were not Christians to speak evil of the Lord.

We see that when Paul wrote this letter to Timothy that there were already some widows who had turned aside after Satan. In I Timothy 1:6 we read, “From which some, having strayed, have turned aside to idle talk.” Some of the younger widows were among those who had turned aside to idle talk. II Timothy 4:4 says, “And they will turn *their* ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.” In the future Paul realized that some young widows would turn from the truth to stories that false teachers told. In our next topic we see that some younger men will also turn aside from the truth because of their sinful desires.

The older widows were to be put on the list because their lives had shown that they had become qualified for spiritual leadership among the women just as the elders and deacons had become qualified for spiritual leadership for the church. As a result, Paul gave a summary of how these older women should be supported. If a Christian man or woman had family members that needed someone to supply their needs, these Christians were to take the responsibility for the widows in their family. The church was not to have such a heavy load that it would become weighed down. Instead the church was to be able to support those widows who had no family members to support them. That way the church would be able to meet the needs of those who were really widows because they had no family to support them. We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn how to explain and apply this passage both to widows within their own families and also help the church learn to provide for the needs of widows who have no one to provide for their physical and spiritual needs. May the Lord richly bless you as you help you children learn to understand when the church is to provide for the widows.

11.

Learning to Minister to Elders

In our last topic we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn when the church is to provide for the needs of women that are widows. We also saw that the church is to develop a list of ministering widows who are able to teach and lead the younger women and help them grow to spiritual maturity. When there are family members available to provide the needs of widows, the church is to let those family members take care of the needs of widows in their family. When there are no family members, then the church is to take responsibility for the needs of the widows. Today we are going to see how our children can help the church learn to minister to elders as the elders carry out the responsibility that the Lord has given them to lead the church.

In I Timothy 5:17-18 we read, “Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine. For the Scripture says, “You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain,” and, “The laborer *is* worthy of his wages.” We see in I Timothy 3:4-5 that the word that is translated “rules” means one that has been set over something as a protector or guardian. Titus 3:8 says, “This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you to affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable to men.” Here the word “rule” is translated maintain. As the protectors and guardians of the church the elders are to show the church by their examples how to lead through good works. The word translated “well” means with excellence or to do that which is good. Here we see that this verse talks about elders who lead with excellence by doing good.

The word that is translated “be counted worthy” means to think a person is deserving or worthy. The word that is translated “honor” speaks of honor which is shown to a person or the valuing by which a price is fixed. Two examples of the first use are in I Peter 3:7 which says, “Husbands, likewise, dwell with *them* with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as *being* heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.” and John 4:44 which says, “For Jesus Himself testified that a prophet has no honor in his own country.” The second use of the valuing by which a price is fixed is found in Acts 4:34, “Nor was there anyone among them who lacked; for all who were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of the things that were sold.” Here we see that double honor can include both respect to a person and also financial gifts to assist them in their ministry. Since elders may spend much time leading by example, preparing to teach, and teaching, it is appropriate to share with them financially.

Another way we show honor to elders is by the way we respond when someone makes an accusation against an elder. I Timothy 5:19-21 says, “Do not receive an accusation against an elder except from two or three witnesses. Those who are sinning rebuke in the presence of all, that the rest also may fear. I charge *you* before God and the Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels that you observe these things without prejudice, doing nothing with partiality.” Here we see that we are not to receive an accusation against an elder unless there are at least two or three

witnesses. There are people who will try to destroy the ministry of a godly leader by making false accusations against that leader.

The word “receive” means to accept or take to one’s self. Elders are not to accept an accusation against a fellow elder unless there are two or three witnesses. This means that elders are to have the same process of discipline that any sinning Christian would experience. Matthew 18:15-17 says, “Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that ‘by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.’ “And if he refuses to hear them, tell *it* to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.” There will be occasional cases where an elder has been guilty of sin and there are several witnesses of that fact. In such cases the continuing sins of an elder are to be rebuked before all because an elder is an example to the entire church.

When an elder provides a negative example, he is to be rebuked. A rebuke may be either by word, by action or both. To rebuke before all means to expose the fact of continuing sin after appropriate private correction has taken place with no repentance. The word that is translated “fear” means either fear or reverence. We are to have a godly fear of sin in our lives. The instructions to not receive a charge against an elder without two or three witnesses and the instruction to rebuke an elder publicly that has sinned are to be carried out without prejudice or partiality. The word “prejudice” means not to form an opinion before all of the facts are known. The word “partiality” means not to favor or join with one who is guilty. Here we see that we are to avoid forming any opinions for or against an elder but to follow the instructions of Scripture without partiality.

I Timothy 5:22 says, “Do not lay hands on anyone hastily, nor share in other people’s sins; keep yourself pure.” The word that is translated “hastily” means quickly or shortly. Titus was given similar instructions in Titus 1:5 where we read, “For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you—.” Here we see that the primary ministry of Titus was to qualify elders on the island of Crete just as Timothy was to qualify elders in Ephesus and the surrounding region. Even though this was the primary ministry of both of these men, it takes time for men to meet the qualifications given in the following summary:

We see that the primary responsibilities of Titus in Titus 1:6-9 were to:

- Help potential leaders develop a respected life.
- Help potential leaders develop a healthy marriage.
- Help potential leaders develop a healthy family relationship.
- Help potential leaders become Christ centered and not self-centered.
- Help potential leaders deal with former sinful habits.
- Help potential leaders learn to use their homes for ministry.
- Help potential leaders develop godly character.
- Help potential leaders learn to teach the Word of God.
- Help potential leaders learn to correct those who contradict.

Both Titus and Timothy were given a similar list for developing qualified elders in every church. In the same way we want to help our children learn to become qualified leaders

themselves and then help others to become qualified. This takes time but should be the top priority of every spiritual leader because as leaders we know that our ministry will only carry on to the next generation if we develop healthy reproducing leaders. However, if we understand that we are to use these qualifications to develop qualified leaders, we will lead our children and help them become qualified rather than drive our children by discouraging them and telling them that they are not qualified for spiritual leadership.

We also want to help every existing elder learn to work with a small group of men to help those men become qualified also. By being patient we will be able to appoint leaders who have become qualified because we have shown them how to develop godly character, have taught them the Word of God and have helped them to develop ministry skills. Paul and Barnabas gave us an example of how to develop such leaders as people become Christians in Acts 14:21-23 where we read, “And when they had preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting *them* to continue in the faith, and *saying*, “We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.” So when they had appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.” Here we see that Paul and Barnabas used the following process to develop qualified elders:

They preached the Gospel clearly.

They took time to develop godly character, Biblical knowledge and ministry skills.

They took time to strengthen the souls of the disciples.

They took time to encourage the disciples to continue in the faith.

They prepared the disciples for much tribulation,

They appointed those who became qualified as elders.

They prayed for the continued development of these elders.

They trusted the Lord to work through these elders as the new elders led the churches.

Paul went on to say in I Timothy 5:23-25, “No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for your stomach’s sake and your frequent infirmities. Some men’s sins are clearly evident, preceding *them* to judgment, but those of some *men* follow later. Likewise, the good works of *some* are clearly evident, and those that are otherwise cannot be hidden.” Since Timothy had frequent problems with sickness and infirmity, Paul told him to add a little grape juice (wine) to the water he drank to purify the water to help him reduce the frequency of his sicknesses.

The sins of some Christians were easy to see so that Timothy was to know and recognize that those men were not yet qualified for spiritual leadership. As Timothy spent time ministering with other men he would recognize those who had less obvious sins and still needed more time to become qualified spiritual leaders. In contrast, the good works of other men showed that they had become qualified to serve as elders because their lives met the qualifications listed above. As Timothy worked with other men, especially those who might be quiet and served the Lord where other people did not notice them, Timothy would also recognize those who were qualified that others may not have noticed. The same thing will happen as you help your physical and spiritual children grow and mature in Christ. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children become qualified to serve as elders and equip them to develop others also.

12.

Learning Why we Need to Learn to be Content

In our last topic we saw that we want to have as our goal to help our physical and spiritual children become qualified to serve the Lord as elders and learn how to develop others to become elders. We saw that our greatest priority is to develop them and equip them so that they can be a part of the next generation of spiritual leadership. Today we are going to see that we want to help our children learn to become content with whatever the Lord provides them so that they are able to serve the Lord effectively because they trust the Lord to supply their needs.

In the time of the early church it is estimated that about one half of all of the people in the Roman Empire were bondservants and in slavery to their masters. As a result, I Timothy 6:1-2 says, "Let as many bondservants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and *His* doctrine may not be blasphemed. And those who have believing masters, let them not despise *them* because they are brethren, but rather serve *them* because those who are benefited are believers and beloved. Teach and exhort these things." Many of the people who had become Christians as Paul and Timothy ministered in various cities were also slaves.

Some of their masters were Christians but many were not. Regardless of whether they were Christians or not Paul told those who were slaves to count their own masters worthy of all honor. The word that is translated "count" means to be the leader, to consider, to esteem or to think. Philippians 2:3 says, "*Let nothing be done* through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself." Here we see that slaves were to place a high value on their masters and count them worthy of all honor. We see that slaves could model the love of Christ to their masters. As a result, Paul said that their masters would not blaspheme either God or His doctrine.

In some cases these slaves had masters who were Christians. Paul pointed out that this gave them two different relationships with their masters. First, as slaves and as Christians they were not to despise their masters. Second, they were also brethren in Christ. Since their master also served Christ, the work that they did as slaves also benefited other Christians. Those who were slaves were to serve with love because those who received the benefit of their good works were both believers and the beloved of God. In many cases their masters probably also used part of the money that they made to serve the Lord by sharing with others. Timothy was to help both slaves and masters understand their new relationship in Christ and encourage them to show their love to one another.

False teachers had a very different attitude as they taught masters and slaves because they were trying to gain riches for themselves. As a result, I Timothy 6:3-5 says, "If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, *even* the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions, useless wranglings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose

that godliness is a *means of gain*. From such withdraw yourself.” Here we see four characteristics of false teachers.

First, false teachers do not teach the teachings that are in the Word of God. They may use the Word of God but they will twist what they use in their efforts to deceive. As a result, they are not teaching the Word of God but are using a verse out of its context to back up their own ideas. Second, false teachers do not consent to wholesome doctrine. The word that is translated “wholesome” means the words that are free from man’s opinions or any mixture of error. In II Timothy 4:3-4 the word is translated sound and that verse says, “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, *because* they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn *their* ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.” Here we see why many people want to hear the opinions and ideas of false teachers instead of hearing the teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ from the Word of God. Third, the opinions of false teachers allow people to live according to their own sinful desires and are not teachings that are in agreement with godliness.

Fourth, false teachers are proud. They actually have no understanding of the teachings of Christ because I Corinthians 2:14 says, “But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.” Since false teachers lack spiritual understanding, we see several things that they do in their teaching instead. False teachers are obsessed with disputes. The word that is translated “obsessed” means to be sick or have an ailment of the mind. The word that is translated “disputes” means debates or controversy. II Timothy 2:23 says, “But avoid foolish and ignorant disputes, knowing that they generate strife.” False teachers want to get people arguing over the meaning of words.

The goal of false teachers is to develop envy, strife, evil suspicions (slander), and useless wranglings (arguments) among people. False teachers do this because they are people of corrupt minds (destructive minds) and destitute (to deprive or rob) of the truth. Here we see that false teachers may have heard the truth and turned away from the truth. As a result, their goal is the destruction of others and they do everything they can to keep people from hearing the truth. The phrase “supposing that godliness is a means of gain” means that they think that they can use religion to deceive people and gain riches for themselves. The word translated “withdraw yourself” means to remove yourself and stay away from such false teachers.

We see the attitude that goes with true godliness in I Timothy 6:6-8 where we read, “Now godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into *this* world, *and it is* certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content.” The word that is translated “contentment” means an attitude of mind that causes us to be satisfied with what we have. Another form of the word translated content is used in Philippians 4:11 where Paul said of himself, “Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content.” Paul had learned to be content with whatever the Lord supplied for him. This is the genuine contentment that riches can never provide.

We need to remember that we had nothing when we were born. When we die, we will take nothing with us. Christ said in Matthew 6:19-21, “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on

earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” Since we can take nothing with us, the only things that we have that are eternal are the treasures that we have laid up in heaven as spiritual rewards. Those rewards will last for all eternity. That is why we can be thankful for the fact that God supplies us with the basic necessities of food and clothing for this life.

In I Timothy 6:9-10 we read, “But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and *into* many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all *kinds of* evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.” The word that is translated “desire” means to have as a purpose or a strong desire. This reminds us of the fact that many people have a strong desire to be rich. James 4:4 says, “Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.” Here the word is translated wants and shows that some people who profess to be Christians actually have a strong desire to be a friend of the world. Those who make that choice also choose to be an enemy of God.

That strong desire to be rich causes many people to fall. I Corinthians 10:12 says, “Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.” The word that is translated “fall” means to fall into a person’s power or to fall among robbers. In the parable of the Good Samaritan, Christ asked the question in Luke 10:36, “So which of these three do you think was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?” Some fall into temptation. Others are caught in the trap of their own desires. Still other people turn to foolish (unwise choices) and harmful (choices that cause injury) lusts because of their strong desire to be rich. These choices have permanent effects. The word translated “destruction” talks about both physical and eternal destruction. In I Corinthians 5:5 it talks about physical destruction while II Thessalonians 1:9 says, “These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power.” Perdition speaks of the eternal judgment.

We see that the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. There are four roots in the New Testament, two positive and two negative. The other negative root is in Hebrews 12:15 where we read, “Looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled.” Just as Esau chose a bowl of stew, many people choose money and in doing so reject the faith because of their greed. Others pierce or torture their souls and cause much suffering in their lives in their greed for money. That is why we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to be content with whatever the Lord chooses to supply for them in their lives. May the Lord richly bless you as you show by your own life and example that you are content with the things that the Lord has given you.

13.

Learning to be Rich in Good Works

In our last topic we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to be content with whatever the Lord chooses to supply for them. We saw that many people choose to be controlled by their greed for money. We also saw that the choice to be controlled by greed is very destructive. In fact those who continue to follow that choice will experience eternal destruction. Instead of seeking worldly riches, we are going to see in our topic today that the Lord wants us to show our children how to be rich in good works in their lives.

Paul gave Timothy some encouragement for his personal life as he came to the conclusion of this letter. We need to give our children this same encouragement. In I Timothy 6:11-12 we read, "But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses." These two verses give us a good outline for our own lives. We are to flee certain things, follow certain things and fight the good fight of faith.

First, we are to flee the desire to love money and the other related things mentioned in verses three through ten of this chapter. Second, we are to follow or pursue six things. The word translated "righteousness" means to seek those things that are right whether we are talking about right with God or right with other people. Godliness means that we have a deep reverence for God that causes us to have a desire to please Him. Third, faith speaks of the belief that we have in Christ that causes us to live to please Him. Philippians 2:12-13 says, "Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for *His* good pleasure." True faith produces godly service.

Fourth, love speaks of our response to Christ because of His love that He has shown for us. Christ said in John 15:9-10, "As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love." The thing that makes it possible for us to love is the fact that we are responding to His love for us. I John 4:19 says, "We love Him because He first loved us." Fifth, patience speaks of our endurance when facing trials. James 1:4 says, "But let patience have *its* perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing." Here we see that patience helps us to continue to grow in spiritual maturity. Sixth, gentleness makes it possible for us to restore others. Galatians 6:1 says, "Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who *are* spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted." We want to continue to grow and pursue each of these six things in our lives.

To fight the good fight of faith means to make an all out effort like a runner in a race to fight against Satan and spiritual darkness. To lay hold means to seize and has the thought that we look at this world from the viewpoint of heaven and not from this earth. We have been called

to that eternal life and so as we look at this world from the viewpoint of heaven we realize that Christ has already won the battle. Since Christ has won the battle we can pray knowing that Acts 4:31 says, "And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness." Timothy had made a good confession and we can show our children how to do the same.

Paul gave another personal charge to Timothy when he said in I Timothy 5:13-16, "I urge you in the sight of God who gives life to all things, and *before* Christ Jesus who witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate, that you keep *this* commandment without spot, blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ's appearing, which He will manifest in His own time, *He who is* the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom *be* honor and everlasting power. Amen." Paul gave this charge to Timothy in the sight of God and the Lord Jesus Christ and asked him to keep it.

Christ had modeled what it means to make a good confession when he stood before Pilate. John 18:36-37 says, "Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here." Pilate therefore said to Him, "Are You a king then?" Jesus answered, "You say *rightly* that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice." Pilate heard that message and made a choice. He said that he found no fault in Christ and then condemned him to death.

In the same way we want to show our children how to keep the commandment of Christ so that our lives will also be without spot and blameless at His coming. Christ is the blessed and only Potentate (He has all authority). He is King of kings. He is Lord of lords. He is the One who has always existed and will always exist. He is the true Light that will provide eternal light. All honor and everlasting power belong to Him.

In the time of Timothy there were some Christians in Ephesus who had riches just as there are some Christians who have riches today. As a result, Paul told Timothy in I Timothy 6:17-19, "Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. *Let them* do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life." Here we see that Paul was to command these rich Christians to avoid two attitudes. First, they were not to be haughty. The word that is translated "haughty" means to be proud or highminded. The only other place where this word is used in the New Testament is in Romans 11:20-21 where we read, "Well *said*. Because of unbelief they were broken off, and you stand by faith. Do not be haughty, but fear. For if God did not spare the natural branches, He may not spare you either." Here we see that Christians with riches are not to be proud. Instead they are to have a godly reverence or fear.

Second, they were not to trust in uncertain riches. Proverbs 23:4-5 says, "Do not overwork to

be rich; Because of your own understanding, cease! Will you set your eyes on that which is not? For *riches* certainly make themselves wings; they fly away like an eagle *toward* heaven.” Riches are very uncertain. Instead Timothy was told to tell the rich to trust in the living God because He gives us richly all things to enjoy. God has given us His blessings because He wants us to enjoy those blessings instead of seeking earthly riches.

Timothy was told that God gives us His blessings so that we can do what is right in the sight of God and be rich in good works. Then we see how rich Christians are to use the riches that the Lord has given them. They are to be ready to give. Here we see that God has given riches to some Christians so that they can enjoy the privilege of distributing that money to meet needs that God brings to their attention. The word that is translated “willing to share” means to share one’s possessions. Here we see that the Lord does give some Christians earthly riches but those riches are not for themselves. Instead those riches are to share with those in need. Paul had concluded his last visit to the elders in Ephesus with the following words written in Acts 20:35, “I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.” Riches are not to hoard for self. Instead God gives riches so we can have the joy of giving to the needy.

Paul said that when we give to others as a part of our ministry that we enjoy the blessing of giving on this earth and we also are storing up for the time to come. Christ told the rich young ruler in Matthew 19:21, “Jesus said to him, “If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.” Here Christ told the rich young ruler that he would have eternal riches if he would follow Christ. At the same time he would enjoy the privilege of sharing with the poor. Greed controlled this young man. As a result, he chose not to follow Christ and went away sorrowful and will have nothing in the future except judgment.

Paul gave one final charge to Timothy as he concluded this book. I Timothy 6:20-21 says, “Timothy! Guard what was committed to your trust, avoiding the profane *and* idle babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge—by professing it some have strayed concerning the faith. Grace *be* with you. Amen.” The word that is translated “guard” means to take care not to violate the trust that has been given to you. Timothy had been given the Word of God by Paul. Now he was to pass on to others the Word of God and not his own opinions, thoughts or ideas. He was to avoid the ungodly and empty discussions of people without Christ. He was to avoid those false teachings which false teachers were trying to spread among the Christians in the region of Ephesus. These false teachings had caused those who were teaching them to miss the mark concerning the faith. I Timothy 1:5-6 says, “Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, *from* a good conscience, and *from* sincere faith, from which some, having strayed, have turned aside to idle talk.” In the same way we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to be rich in good works are not stray from the faith. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children how to be rich in good works.